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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a discipline plan at Brentwood (Missouri) Junior High School based on firm and consistent enforcement of rules and regulations that have been developed cooperatively by principal, faculty, and students. The principal holds monthly faculty meetings where all students who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties are discussed by the entire group to decide an appropriate course of action. The behavior modification plan includes both negative and positive reinforcements. Negative reinforcers include contracts for students who refuse to behave or perform in class, homework assignment sheets to inform parents of assignments, study hall for students who do not turn in homework, Saturday detention for students who break rules as outlined in the student folder, and class contracts developed between the principal, teacher, and class. Positive reinforcers include the ice cream social, honor roll gallery, "Thank U Gram," Eagle awards, Academic Awards Night, special days, Senior Citizens Day Luncheon, complimentary letters to parents, and faculty telephone calls complimenting students. (TE)

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CREATIVE BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION STRATEGIES THAT WORK

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Brentwood Junior High School is a small suburban junior high school in St. Louis County. Our student body is comprised of 27% minority students, the majority of whom are bussed to our school from the inner city. Our students come from a diverse social and economic backgrounds and about 39% are not living with both of their original parents. Many of these students require the structure and support that our school offers.

Brentwood Junior High School's success emanates from an atmosphere where students and faculty cooperatively work together to promote an eagerness for learning. Simply stated: Students are motivatd to achieve. Our school has responded to the national demand for accountability and excellence with increased effort and vigor, resulting in after school tutorial classes, required study halls and a strong discipline program. The end result of theses efforts has been that our studnets have not only ranked first annually in the state on the basic minimum competency test (BEST) but for two years not a single eighth grade student failed the test.

The school's discipline plan is based on the belief that learning cannot take place amidst chaos. THe ideal environment for learning is a structured supportive one where the faculty, students and parents are well-informed about the expectations and rules of the school. There is firm and consistent enforcement of all rules and regulations and the principal, faculty, and students have worked cooperatively to develop the discipline program.

It is the philosophy of the Brentwood Junior HIgh School that discipline is based on natural consequences rather than punishment. All parents of seventh grade students are invited to a meeting prior to the beginning of the school term where all of the rules and responsibilities are clearly defined in a student folder that has been developed in cooperation with students, teachers and principal. There are no deviations from the rules or sanctions as outlined in the student folder. The staff is aware of the expectations for student behavior and they are aware that discipline will be immediately and strictly enforced by the principal.

The principal holds monthly faculty meetings where all students who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties are discussed by the entire group. At this time, the faculty decides whether a student should receive remedial or other special assistance or be moved to another academic track. Recommendations are also made by the teachers at that time concerning students who should be referred to Special School District for evaluation. The faculty also recommends students to be placed on contract or for transfer to another group if this move will provide the student with a better educational environment. The

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principal perceives her role as a facilitator for faculty decisions reached at these monthly meetings. During the meeting, teachers who have experienced success with an individual or group of students, share their insight with the rest of the faculty.

THere are two phases to the behavior modifcation plan. It is important in modifying behavior to implement both negative and positive reinforcers The negative strategies include the use of contracts for those students who refuse to behave or perform in class, homeowrk assignment sheets for parent's who wish to be informed daily of their students homework assignment from each teacher, homeowrk study hall for students who do not turn in their homework, Saturday Detention assignment to students who break rules as outlined in the student folder, and class contracts for an entire class as developed between the principal, teacher and class. The positive reinforcers created fo help students achieve are the ice cream social, honor roll gallery, Thank U Gram, Eagle Awards, Academic Awards Night, Special Days, Senior Citizens Day Luncheon, Best Test Part, complimentary letters to parents, and faculty telephone calls complimenting students.

Students who consistently misbehave in class, disrupt and prevent other students from learning or refuse to perform are referred to the principal who may decide to put the student on contract. Teachers may also recommend a student for contract at the regular monthly faculty meeting. The student picks up his contract every morning from the principal's secretary and presents it to each of his teachers at the beginning of the class period. The teacher returns it to the student at the end of the clas with a mark indicating a yes or a no that the student has behaved of performed in their class. For every no the student must spend a half an hour in the principal's office studying after school up to one hour. A student who receives more that two no's in one day would receive a Saturday Detenetion assignment.

The second strategy developed to help students to perform is the homework assignment sheet. Many parents complain that when they ask their child if they have any homework, the answer is always no. Therefore, at the request of the parents-- their child picks up an assignment sheet each morning from the principal's office. At the conclusion of each class, the student writes the day's assignment on the sheet and has the teacher initial the sheet indicating that the student has recorded the assignment accurately and completely. At the conclusion of the school day, the student has the principal's secretary certify that the assignment sheet has been completed and the student takes the sheet home to their parent who signs the sheet to indicate that they have been made aware of the student's assignments.The following morning, the student returns the assignment sheet that has been signed by their parent. Students usually learn to record their daily assignments and rarely have to use the assignment sheet for a very long period.

A third intervention is our after school study hall. A student who does not turn in a completed assignment on the day that it is due, is assigned a study hall for after school of that day. The teacher turns the student's name and assignment into the principopal's office where the study hall teacher collects the asignments at the close of the school day. A different teacher supervises the study hall each day.

The study hall assignment is for a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes. The study hall teacher returns the completed assignments to the principals office for distribution to the appropriate teachers. The study hall teacher does not correct the assignments but merely makes sure that they are complete.

Another intervention is Saturday Detention. Reasons for the detention are outline in the student folder. Teacher's recommend students to the principal for Saturday Detention which is held on Saturday morning at the school from 8:30 until 10:30 a.m. A faculty member is paid to supervise Saturday Detention which is a study hall where students may not talk, sleep, pass notes nor leave for any reason. Students may not be tardy nor enter Saturday Detention without homework. Students who miss Saturday Detention without an acceptable excuse or who are asked to leave because of inappropriate behavior are suspended by the principal.

If a teacher is having problems with an entire class, they may request that the entire class be put on contract. That means that any student who misbehaves will be assigned to 30 minutes after school either in the teacher's classroom or the principal's office. The students do not have to pick up any contract but the teacher informs the students at the end of the class if they are required to report for after school detention. For the students who do not misbehave for an entire week, some type of reward is given at the end of the week. The reward may be a free period or the opportunity to work on a favorite project. Behavior usually improves very quickly when an entire class is placed on contract.

The main thrust of our interventions are positive rather than negative. The purpose of our school is to have students eager to come and eager to learn. Therefore, we have created positive interventions. The prinicpal sends a complimentary letter to each parent of a student who has a 3 point or better grade point average on their report card. In addition a "Thank U Gram" is sent to students who have done something admirable. An ice cream social is held in the school cafeteria during the school day for those students who make over a 3 point average on their report card.

There is an honor roll gallery of 8 by 10 pictures of those students who have a 3 point average or better. The journalism photographer takes the pictures which are sent home as gifts to the parents after they have been displayed for the semester. Students enjoy having their pictures on display.

Eagle Awards are given to students who have not had a single tardy for a semester. This gives students an opportunity for an honor who might not otherwise receive one. Eagle awards are also given to teachers or students who have done something very worthwhile. Academic Awards are given in May to all students who have been recommended by their teachers for outstanding work during the year. Parents of the students are invited to an evening program where the awards are made. The ceremony is concluded with a reception for parents and students in the school cafeteria.

Faculty members take a group of students names to call to their

parents in an effort to communicate with the home. The teacher asks if the parents have any questions concerning thier child's progress or if they want any particular teacher to get in touch with them. The teacher gathers information such as health problems or failure notices prior to calling the home. Each teacher usually takes about 20 cards to call.

Each year there are special traditional days which help make the school year more interesting. On St. Patricks Day and Valentines Day, all junior high students participate in Mr. and Miss Irrisitible Day. Senior Citizens' Day is a day when all Brentwood Senior Citizens arere invited to the school for lunch. The students set the tables, serve and clear, and act as host and hostesses for the entire afternoon. A special musical program is performed by the band and chorus for the honored guests.

One of our strongest, new programs is our peer team teaching innovation that has been very effective in helping students learn. Mrs. Schroer's english classes are very involved in this activity. She has had tremendous results with this method of having students actively involved in helping each other achieve.

Our students score extremely high not only on the Missouri State mandated competency test but they also perform very well on norm referenced and criteria referenced tests. We attribute our success not only to our academic interventions that we have developed but also to the many positive activities that help the students enjoy their years in our school. We love our students, we expect them to behave and perform. They are the products of our endeavors and we are proud of them.